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SUBJECT: NICARAGUA KICKS OFF "CALL AND LIVE" ANTI-TRAFFICKING CAMPAIGN

¶1. (SBU) SUMMARY: The Inter American Development Bank (IDB), the International Organization for Migration (IOM), the Ricky Martin Foundation, and UNICEF launched the Nicaraguan "Llama y Vive" (Call and Live) anti-trafficking in persons (TIP) campaign December 6 with the participation of the Ministries of Government and Family. The campaign includes a youth-oriented media communications strategy to raise awareness and promote the use of a free 24-hour emergency hotline. Representatives of the Llama y Vive initiative expressed concern about Nicaragua's vulnerability to trafficking, the lack of awareness of the existence of the phenomenon, and its consequences for human rights and development. While acknowledging the campaign was a first step in the prevention phase, they also stressed it was "not enough" and called for greater civil society and government collaboration to combat the scourge of human trafficking. The IOM credited the State Department's Office of Population, Refugees, and Migration (PRM) for its role in introducing a pilot program for the Return and Reintegration of TIP Victims in Central America.

¶2. (SBU) SUMMARY CONTINUED: Subsequent discussions held the week of December 11-15, with the Minister of Family, Vice Minister of Government, and the Director of the Nicaraguan Women's Institute (INIM) indicate that the 133 hotline is not well advertised, has suffered technical difficulties and is not always reliable, and may not be sufficiently staffed or administered. According to some accounts, the hotline only works in Managua, which counters the campaign's pledge to provide assistance to people at risk of being trafficked along Nicaragua's borders. Further, shelters that are run out of the Ministry of Family are set up only to assist children and adolescents, and thus unlikely to meet the needs of trafficked women. END SUMMARY

133 HOTLINE--CALL AND LIVE, IT'S FREE AND CONFIDENTIAL

¶3. (U) Poloff attended the December 6 launching of the Llama y Vive anti-trafficking campaign, a collaborative project sponsored by the IDB, Ricky Martin Foundation, IOM, UNICEF, and the Ministries of Family and Government. The Llama y Vive initiative is part of a regional effort to provide a mechanism for the prevention and protection of trafficking victims aimed primarily at vulnerable women, adolescents, and individuals seeking to find work outside of Nicaragua. The campaign seeks to enable and encourage potential victims and witnesses to report and denounce trafficking incidents by providing a free and confidential hotline under the slogan of "call and live." The Ministry of Family had already established a free 24-hour emergency hotline #133 to help children and youth at risk, and in conjunction with the Llama y Vive initiative is extending the use of the hotline to serve victims of trafficking and sexual exploitation. The 133 hotline ostensibly will be staffed by lawyers, psychologists, and social workers trained to provide assistance to victims of trafficking. In addition, the Ministry of Family is to provide transportation service that will take victims to shelter.

¶4. (U) The campaign features the images of pop culture in its mass media strategy to disseminate information about the risks and dangers of trafficking. The popular Puerto Rican entertainer Ricky Martin is the Llama y Vive spokesman and face in several TV commercials, videos, radio ads, and other forms of outreach. The campaign also includes short vignettes of testimonials by trafficking survivors, and portrays those who fall into the hands of traffickers as the "slaves of our time."

"NO KNOWLEDGE OF PHENOMENON"

¶5. (U) The interlocutors of the opening event warned that Nicaragua is especially vulnerable as a source country due to extreme poverty, level

¶6. (U) In her remarks, Vice Minister of Government Deyanira Arguello reiterated the concern about Nicaragua's vulnerability to trafficking in persons and need to promote greater awareness of and education about the issue. Touting the role of the National Anti-Trafficking Coalition to strengthen police action along the border, and the actions by the Ministry of Education to teach children and adolescents about the dangers of trafficking, Arguello pledged the current government's commitment to fighting modern day slavery. She hopes that the incoming government will continue to deal seriously with the issue. Arguello extolled the Llama y Vive initiative as the first time NGOs and the government have joined forces to effect "transcendent change."

¶7. (U) UNICEF representative Debora Comini presented statistics on the number of children affected by the phenomenon and highlighted the devastating consequences it posed for Nicaragua's development. According to Comini, available statistics give only part of the story; for every trafficking incident reported, there are probably three more that go unreported. She praised the Ministries of

Family and Government for their commitment, and pointedly called upon the National Assembly to complete the task of reforming the Penal Code to guarantee that trafficking offenders receive punishment that is proportional to the crime.

OFF LINE, GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS EXPRESS SKEPTICISM

¶8. (SBU) Follow-up discussions poloff had separately with the Minister of Family, Ligia Teran de Astorga; Executive Director of INIM, Maria Ester Vanegas Lopez; and Vice Minister Arguello, revealed capacity weaknesses at the government level that would affect the feasibility of the anti-trafficking initiative. The vice minister shared her skepticism about operation of the hotline, noting that the 133 emergency line set up by the Ministry of Family (under Teran's leadership) was not fully functional nor reliable. In addition, she revealed that 133 is inadequately staffed and that often there was no vehicle available to provide transportation for the callers in peril. She said the success of the Llama y Vive campaign will depend on whether the Ministry of Family can improve the hotline service. As head of the women's institute, Vanegas expressed concern about the lack of resources and political will to address the issue.

¶9. (SBU) Vanegas claimed public knowledge about the hotline was limited, and that it was primarily established to provide a line of support for children and adolescents. Arguello indicated that the existing government-run shelters were only for children and not equipped to assist women who were either trafficked or suffered other forms of abuse. Teran, in contrast, was far more upbeat about the hotline as a service to assist children and adolescents, but explained that #133 was "only available in Managua," a statement at odds with the media campaign which suggests the service is set up to assist prevention throughout the country.

U.S. PRAISED FOR ASSISTANCE WITH REINTEGRATION OF VICTIMS

¶10. (U) While Llama y Vive focuses primarily on the prevention phase of the anti-trafficking in persons strategy, Raul Rivas of IOM took the c

COMMENT

¶11. (SBU) The Llama y Vive initiative is a positive development in employing NGO and government cooperation to raise awareness and generate me
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